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Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 112: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (A/48/3 (Chap. VII.E), A/48/178, 286, 291, 327, 329 and Corr.1, and 353; A/C.3/48/2 and 5)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in accordance with its decision taken on 24 September 1993, the General Assembly had held a number of high-level plenary meetings to examine the status of international cooperation in the field of drug control. At the conclusion of that debate, on 28 October the Assembly had adopted resolution 48/12 on measures to strengthen international cooperation in that field.

2. Mr. JUPPIN de FONDAUMIERE (United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)) said that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/12 had reaffirmed the Member States' commitment to the fight against drug abuse. The international community had an effective arsenal at its disposal, including a common strategy, a blueprint for action and the required institutional machinery. The time had come to shift the emphasis to action.

3. At the national level, countries must promote the active involvement of local, regional and national governments, community groups and non-governmental organizations. To that end, the Programme had sought to nurture the participation of a wide spectrum of partners in the fight against drug abuse. The private sector had recognized the need for a broad-based effort in drug control, and promising initiatives had also been launched with the media, city administrations and sports organizations. Governments should fully incorporate their drug-control priorities and strategies into their overall socio-economic development plans, ensure adequate internal coordination between the various sectors involved and develop institutions to meet the challenge.

4. UNDCP advocated the formulation of drug-control master plans by each country. Such plans would provide a comprehensive picture of the drug-abuse situation and enable external partners to assist better in their implementation. Those plans were important elements that should be incorporated into the country strategy. UNDCP had also set up a country-programme framework to facilitate assessment of control requirements. Internal coordination was essential at the national level. A drug-control focal point could ensure the necessary coordination and communication links and facilitate contacts with bilateral and multilateral partners. All Governments should ratify and fully adhere to the international drug-control conventions so that the necessary legal framework could be established.

5. The ability of drug traffickers to redirect operations to other countries underscored the need for close cooperation among States on a regional and subregional basis. Due to the vast increase in cross-border exchanges, random border-checks were rapidly losing their effectiveness. Exchange of information and intelligence must replace earlier control mechanisms as the foundation for an effective international control system. That required a fundamental rethinking of the goals of inter-State cooperation. In addition to intraregional communication, there was a need for joint implementation of drug-control activities. The pooling of resources was a prerequisite for progress in such areas as alternative development.

(Mr. Juppin de Fondaumière)

6. Regional arrangements were rapidly evolving into a nucleus of action for multilateral drug control. Inter-country arrangements in south-east Asia were becoming a model for the rest of the world. With their specificity and focus, regional organizations had an unequalled potential to play a unifying role in drug control. In view of the need to link national efforts to regional arrangements and incorporate regional efforts into a global framework, the Programme looked forward to further cooperation with regional bodies. The United Nations regional economic commissions and other regional bodies had a tremendous comparative advantage in fostering regional cooperation in drug control under UNDCP leadership.

7. The United Nations system collectively had the capacity to tackle the drug problem on all fronts. Nevertheless, it was essential to ensure that all United Nations agencies allocated an adequate level of resources to that effort. While UNDCP was at the vanguard of the inter-agency effort, it could not be expected to shoulder the entire burden. At the global level, the Programme had made gradual but encouraging progress while working with the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, ILO, FAO, UNESCO and other agencies.

8. United Nations bodies should reflect the drug dimension in their programme activities. Inter-agency efforts in drug control must be fully coordinated with UNDCP. All Governments must raise drug-control concerns in the governing bodies of the other United Nations entities, which was the pivotal element of the inter-agency effort. Despite the broad support for the system-wide effort, comprehensive inter-agency efforts had been slow in reaching the desired level. The need to bridge the gap between principle and practice must be considered at the meetings of governing bodies and other decision-making forums. By placing drug control on the agendas of such gatherings, Member States could take the next step towards developing the system-wide effort in drug control.

9. The Programme's primary objective at the global level was to achieve a balanced approach in which illicit production, consumption and trafficking were all addressed as a single phenomenon. At the current time, that required greater emphasis on demand reduction, particularly in the area of prevention and education. It was very reassuring that Member States fully supported the various strategic orientations devised by the Programme over the past year. UNDCP would step up its efforts to promote action in all areas of priority for Governments and looked forward to enlisting the support of non-governmental organizations, professional and business organizations, the academic world, the mass media, schools and sports movements to that end.

10. Mr. HART (Australia) expressed appreciation for the statement by the representative of UNDCP and hoped that all delegations would give it the attention that it deserved.

AGENDA ITEM 108: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

(b) EFFECTIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION THROUGH AUTONOMY (A/48/147 and Add.1)

11. Mr. ARZOUMANIAN (Armenia) said that the uneasy tension that had emerged between the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity often

(Mr. Arzoumanian, Armenia)

complicated the search for solutions. A balanced and flexible approach should be taken to the implementation of those principles. Many of the current self-determination claims outside the context of decolonization needed an operational framework that could help to determine their legitimacy and levels of realization. Some of those claims had escalated into long-standing conflicts or civil wars that presented a challenge to the international community both in terms of maintaining peace and stability and of the realization of human rights. Preventive measures could help to attain those goals. In that connection, the Liechtenstein initiative put forward in documents A/48/147 and Add.1 was very valuable, especially the important distinction it made between the concepts of "minority" and "community".

12. Realization of the right of self-determination through autonomy was a highly useful concept which could help to reconcile the right to self-determination with the principle of territorial integrity. Though the right to self-determination was a fundamental principle, its realization would require the elaboration of differentiated approaches to concrete self-determination claims, as no single pre-determined solution was suitable for all cases. Consideration could be given to the establishment of an impartial body to look into self-determination claims. Such a body could be instrumental in preventing outbreaks of ethnic conflict and civil strife and facilitating post-conflict confidence-building measures. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia had proposed the transformation of the Trusteeship Council into such a body. Alternatively, a special Security Council committee could be set up to monitor self-determination movements and to alert the Council whenever a specific situation was likely to escalate into a threat to peace. In view of the potential for unsettled self-determination claims to escalate into open conflicts, his delegation would support all initiatives aimed at the creation of either body.

13. Mr. CASTRO (Philippines) said that the framers of the Charter of the United Nations had been very careful in charting the course of dependent peoples towards self-government or independence. While external self-determination was the ideal for all peoples, there might be cases where "peoples", in exercising their right to internal self-determination, had decided to remain within the body politic of which they were an integral part, thus upholding the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of their State. Democratic traditions and structures were an expression of the right to self-determination. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 had clearly stated that the right to self-determination should not be construed as authorizing any action which would impair the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States. The extent of the autonomy that various groups should enjoy within nation States should be determined by such States within the framework of their national constitution and fundamental laws through democratic and peaceful means. It was in that context that the Philippines viewed the Liechtenstein initiative (A/48/147 and Add.1).

14. The principle of self-determination needed to be studied further in view of its many unforeseen ramifications; the numerous regional conflicts that had erupted since the end of the cold war were largely the result of a confusion in the appreciation of the actual dimensions of the right to internal

(Mr. Castro, Philippines)

self-determination as opposed to the right to external self-determination. Indeed, in the previous year, his country's Minister for Foreign Affairs had proposed the revision of the United Nations Charter in order to refine further the principles and norms of collective action not only to respond to new situations as perceived by Liechtenstein but also to provide for new contingencies in the forthcoming millennium.

15. Mr. ROSENBERG (Ecuador) said that Ecuador had always been committed to the principle of self-determination for peoples under foreign domination. While the campaign waged by the United Nations on behalf of those peoples was one of the noblest and most satisfying, the scope of the right to self-determination ended with the achievement of decolonization, which was the extent of the Organization's mandate under its Charter. The principle of self-determination could not run counter to the equally inalienable principle of respect for the territorial integrity of States. To violate the latter principle would be to threaten further the already fragile international peace and produce the opposite effect of the Liechtenstein initiative.

16. However, that initiative could be used to improve and implement the concept of governance; it could help to develop methods that would assist Member States in their efforts to bring about the full advancement of the various components of their societies. As many conflicts today stemmed from the frustration of groups within societies, his Government had given increasing decision-making powers to local authorities in order to foster regional development, thereby eliminating such frustrations, and to help the State to adopt mechanisms that addressed the legitimate aspirations of the different communities.

17. While the topic deserved further consideration, it did not fall within the competence of the Third Committee. It related more to the technical cooperation programmes implemented by the operational bodies of the United Nations system such as the United Nations Development Programme, since it related to efforts to restructure States and improve public administration. Should the General Assembly decide to continue consideration of the issue, the best forum would be the Sixth Committee, which might be able to come up with appropriate legal recommendations to satisfy the legitimate concerns of Liechtenstein and of many other Member States.

18. Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria) said that the question of self-determination must be part of the global effort to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Initiatives such as self-determination through internal autonomy provided for under the Charter needed the collective consideration and support of the entire international community in order to forestall wars, human suffering and anarchy resulting from the new phenomenon of "failed" nation States incapable of sustaining themselves.

19. However, while the instrument of self-determination had helped to bring down empires and force colonial Governments to be more responsive to the governed, a new, positive role for that right needed to be defined in order to assist democratic development in non-democratic States while strengthening democracy in the democratic ones. Without tolerance between distinct communities, the break-up of existing States would only lead to further schisms

(Mr. Gambari, Nigeria)

and ethnic strife. In order to avoid such chaos, the international community should encourage groups to work out their differences within existing national communities.

20. Realization of the right of self-determination through autonomy was a concept familiar to the experience of his own country with its multitude of ethnic groups, religions, cultures and languages; the federal and local government system in Nigeria had been created with a view to achieving national unity by decentralizing power and promoting tolerance and harmony among the various autonomous communities, thereby safeguarding the rights of minorities in addition. The resulting sense of belonging had helped to maintain peace and facilitate the collective effort in building the nation.

21. His delegation believed that self-determination through autonomy was a credible alternative to the current tendency towards the fragmentation of States, and could be used constructively to encourage the internal and non-violent resolution of conflicts by reforming government structures with the emphasis on achieving greater responsiveness through decentralization. It therefore supported the informal draft resolution being circulated by Liechtenstein, which would warrant more thorough discussion at the forty-ninth session.

22. Mr. TÜRK (Slovenia) said that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms continued to form the basic criterion for realization of the right to self-determination, the unpredictable consequences of which were often feared. Self-determination, however, was also a source of great hope, and should be judged by its potential rather than by the recent instances of its misuse. While the right of all peoples to self-determination was a basic human right and a fundamental principle of international law, the notion of political status remained undefined; any analysis of claims to self-determination should therefore take into account all the varying factual circumstances of the particular people concerned.

23. While internal self-determination was undoubtedly a successful vehicle for satisfying claims to self-determination, a widely held view was that such claims were internal political matters which should not be pursued at international level. A challenge to that cautious approach was now overdue; as a basic precept under the United Nations Charter, the notion of self-determination should be re-examined to encompass new situations, taking into account the historical and current development of the right to self-determination on the basis of United Nations instruments. In addition, means of introducing social and political change, including autonomy, should be explored with a view to preventing the escalation of tensions into open conflicts which could also threaten international peace and security.

24. The United Nations was faced with the serious challenge of developing appropriate methods of preventive diplomacy to deal with conflicts and avoiding more dangerous and costly methods - such as peacemaking and peace-keeping. The initiative proposed by Liechtenstein (A/48/147 and Add.1) had considerable potential and merited in-depth discussion at the forty-ninth session. His delegation was prepared to participate actively in that process.

25. Mr. ALI (Iraq) said that, with the end of imperialism, erroneous attempts had been made to reinterpret the principle of the right to self-determination as the right of all ethnic, linguistic and racial groups to rebel or secede from the State, which contravened the spirit of the United Nations Charter and encouraged the fragmentation of States, particularly in the developing countries. With a view to avoiding any escalation of tension and conflict, that right should not be construed in a manner which enabled ethnic minorities to threaten territorial integrity or the political and geographical unity of States in the pursuit of their own narrow interests.

26. The realization of the right to self-determination involved granting political and cultural rights to minorities within one State through open dialogue. As an example, he cited the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan, where legislative and executive power was vested in elected members of the Kurdish community under a pioneering law. The Kurds also enjoyed social and cultural rights; they had Kurdish-language media, while the Kurdish language was a compulsory subject in schools and universities. Despite external and local attempts to thwart the continued progress of its unique experiment, Iraq remained committed to Kurdish autonomy as the means of enabling the Kurdish people of Iraq to achieve its aspirations. Autonomy and the right to self-determination were, however, two separate issues, and any attempt to establish a link between them would be to misconstrue the two concepts.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/C.3/48/L.7/Rev.1 and L.11)

27. Mr. CASTRO (Philippines), introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.7/Rev.1 on the integration of persons with disabilities into society, announced that Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation had decided to join the sponsors. He informed the Committee that a subparagraph had been added after paragraph 3(c) which read, "Encouraging the activities of the United Nations Children's Fund in promoting prevention and early detection, public awareness and community-based rehabilitation in respect of childhood disability;". That subparagraph would be numbered 3(d), and subparagraphs should be renumbered accordingly.

28. Throughout the world, more than 500 million people suffered from some type of disability. Thus, in most countries, at least 1 out of 10 persons was afflicted by a physical, mental or sensory impairment, and that number increased annually. Thousands had been rendered disabled by natural and man-made disasters, disease, wars and civil strife. The draft resolution was thus of signal importance.

29. The sponsors had found it invidious to try to list all specific causes of disability in the draft resolution, and had decided to treat the issue in a broad, comprehensive manner. The text took note of the various encouraging developments in the areas of disabilities that had taken place since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/88. It was the hope of the sponsors that the revised draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

30. Mr. MAQUIEIRA (Chile), introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.11 on the World Summit for Social Development, announced that the following delegations had joined the list of sponsors: Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Benin, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Madagascar, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Niger, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, Viet Nam and Yemen. At the suggestion of several delegations, in paragraph 8 the words "and the relevant regional organizations" had been added following "regional commissions".

31. He said that, firstly, the draft resolution involved procedural matters that had arisen during the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee. Secondly, it called on the General Assembly to take decisions on unresolved issues pending from the Preparatory Committee. The sponsors expected that it would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 110: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/C.3/48/L.8 and L.9)

32. Mrs. PILOTO (Zimbabwe), speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of African States, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.8 entitled "United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders". She emphasized the complex nature of the work of transnational institutions in tackling crime, and said that the draft resolution called on Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide financial and technical support to the Institute.

33. Mr. KUEHL (United States of America) said that his delegation wished to defer introducing draft resolution A/C.3/48/L.9 to a later meeting, at which time it would submit a revised text that took into account the suggestions of various delegations.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.